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SUBJECT: BOUCHER AND VICE CHIEF DISCUSS NEW STEPS IN THE
TRIBAL AREAS

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires Peter W. Bodde. Reason: 1.4 (b),(d)

¶1. (C) Summary: While he demurred from speaking about Pakistan's political situation, Vice Chief of the Army Staff General Ahsan Saleem Hyat was eager to discuss a variety of topics during his June 13 meeting with Assistant Secretary for South and Central Asia Richard Boucher. Hyat reported that Pakistan had completed its investigation into the May 14 Frontier Corps killing of a U.S. army officer. Pakistan was convinced the incident was the work of a disgruntled soldier, not part of a broader problem. He said Pakistan understood the urgency of improving security in Mir Ali and would soon establish checkpoints around the town. Pakistan was also committed to expelling Arabs from the border areas, but believed the action would be more permanent if it was accomplished with the cooperation of the tribal residents. Hyat seemed genuinely concerned about the rapid spread of Talibanization through the Tribal Areas and the surrounding settled areas. He reported that the National Security Council had, on June 11, established a new task force to fight Talibanization. Hyat would be willing to consider having the task force, which he chairs, coordinate development and security efforts in the Tribal Areas. The General spoke quite forcefully on the importance of Afghanistan's turning over two accused Baloch insurgents currently in Afghanistan. End Summary.

¶2. (C) On June 13, Assistant Secretary for South and Central Asia Richard Boucher met with Pakistan's Vice Chief of the Army Staff General Ahsan Saleem Hyat in the General's Rawalpindi office. Also present from the Pakistani side were: Director General for Military Intelligence Major General Nadeem Ijaz Ahmed; Chief of the General Staff Lieutenant General Salahuddin Satti; and Personal Secretary Brigadier General Sajjad Ghani. Attending the meeting with Mr. Boucher were Charge d'Affaires Peter Bodde, Major General James Helmly of the Office of Defense Representative - Pakistan; Senior Advisor Caitlin Hayden; and A/PolCouns(notetaker).

13. (C) Replying to an opening question from Boucher, General Hyat said he preferred not to speak about politics or about the mood of the military, particularly during the ongoing controversy over the Chief Justice's suspension.

INVESTIGATION INTO KILLING OF U.S. OFFICER

14. (C) Hyat expressed regret over the May 14 Frontier Corps troop shooting of a group of U.S. soldiers during a Pakistan-Afghanistan-U.S. border flag meeting. The death of one of the American officers was "most unfortunate"; Hyat was personally saddened and embarrassed by the episode. The Pakistan Military had investigated the assailant's personal history, family, and the state of the Frontier Corps generally. The military was convinced the incident was the result of an individual disgruntled soldier, not part of any kind of trend or broader problem. Hyat promised to pass a copy of the full report to the International Security Assistance Force and to Major General Helmlly.

15. (C) Hyat noted that both the tribal population and the Frontier Corps had condemned the shooting incident. The event violated the Pashtun code, which demanded protection of and hospitality for visitors. The Frontier Corps had existed for over 150 years and had maintained a proud record and tradition. It had paid a disproportionate price in lives and casualties in the War on Terror. They were good troops who did not in any way support such actions.

16. (C) Hyat said he had phoned International Security Assistance Force Commander General McNeill some time after

ISLAMABAD 00002796 002 OF 005

the incident and offered to work together on standard operating procedures for security issues. According to Hyat, during that conversation, McNeill told him the U.S. had faith in the integrity of the Pakistanis' investigation.

CROSS BORDER FIGHTING

17. (C) Concerning the May 11 firing incidents between the Pakistan Military and the Afghan National Army near Angor Ada, Hyat claimed that part of the problem was that the residents and soldiers on opposite sides of the border were from rival tribes. Hyat had traveled to Kabul shortly after the incident to inform the Afghan National Army that Pakistan would place soldiers from a different tribe on the border; he had asked the Afghan army to do the same.

MIR ALI

18. (C) Hyat acknowledged the United States' serious concerns about the security situation inside the town of Mir Ali, North Waziristan. He reported that the Pakistan Military would soon establish checkpoints around the town. The army was also examining what additional forces were needed near Mir Ali.

19. (S/NF) Hyat understood the importance of acting quickly against al Qaeda targets. "We know the issue is time sensitive," he said.

TRIBAL LEADERS VS. FOREIGNERS

10. (C) Hyat stressed the importance of driving Arabs out of the Tribal Areas one way or the other. That said, if the task was accomplished with the cooperation of the local people, the result would be more permanent. Hyat said that his government was working with tribal leaders toward the objective of the tribes forcing Arab foreigners to leave the Tribal Areas. He personally believed considerable arm twisting would be required to make this happen. The government would find ways to support good leaders who were helpful in the government's goals. The government was competing against Arabs' ability to spread significant money

around, but money was not everything; honor also was important. Hyat noted that, if conditions for Afghan civilians improved, Pakistan's work with tribal leaders would be easier.

¶11. (C) Hyat highlighted the need to avoid collateral damage. Media coverage of such damage complicated the government's tasks, not just in the Tribal Areas, but throughout Pakistan.

BORDER INCURSIONS

¶12. (C) According to Hyat, the portions of the Pakistan-Afghanistan border opposite Regional Command-South were relatively secure. He was pleased that Pakistan and Afghanistan had agreed to work together to fight narco-criminals and gun runners operating in Paracha, a town straddling both sides of the border.

¶13. (C) According to Hyat, McNeill had reported to him an increase in cross-border incursions into Afghanistan at three geographic points, two of which were in the Waziristans. Hyat said that the Pakistan Military had purchased an Unmanned Aerial Vehicle from Germany. The Pakistan Military hoped it would be beneficial in combating such incursions.

¶14. (C) Hyat noted that Pakistan's Special Forces required enhanced training to deal with Afghan border issues.

ISLAMABAD 00002796 003 OF 005

TALIBANIZATION

¶15. (C) Hyat seemed genuinely concerned over the situation in the Tribal Areas and the settled areas around the Tribal Areas. He cited recent examples of Talibanization in Tank and Bannu as particularly worrisome. The Frontier Constabulary, which was responsible for patrolling the area separating the Tribal Areas from the settled areas, was recalling units that had been seconded to areas like Karachi; the additional troops would boost security in the Northwest. Additionally, the Pakistan Military was providing equipment, including tanks, Humvees, and artillery, to the Frontier Corps to aid its fight against Taliban and other miscreants inside the Tribal Areas. Pakistan was immediately raising an additional two wings (about a thousand troops) of Frontier Corpsmen. Hyat was anticipating some U.S. financial assistance in establishing these new wings.

MORE ON THE FRONTIER CORPS

¶16. (C) Hyat reported Pakistan was hoping to raise eight new wings of Frontier Corps troops as soon as possible (the two previously mentioned plus six more) with a large proportion of those troops coming from the Waziristans. (Note: A wing includes about about 675 troops. End Note.) Besides needing more personnel, the Frontier Corps needed to enhance its capacity to fight enemies currently better equipped than the Corps.

¶17. (C) Boucher noted the U.S. had committed to assisting with the transformation of the Frontier Corps, but that our estimate was that the transformation would take three to five years. Hyat did not necessarily believe it would take that long, and noted that many of the Pakistan Military's training schools were located in the Northwest Frontier Province. He believed utilizing those already-existing schools and programs could speed the development of Frontier Corps capacity.

PAKISTAN'S GOALS FOR THE TRIBAL AREAS

¶18. (C) Pakistan must "bring the tribal people into the 21st century," according to Hyat. In order to do this, tribals would need to receive a larger "stake" in the nation of Pakistan. One part of that "stake" would be education. The tribal people's enormous desire to educate their children

contrasted with the dearth of schools, especially quality schools, in the border region. Quality government schools would provide an attractive alternative to madrassahs -- something that would greatly benefit stability and security in the area. Similarly, the provision of vocational education was central to meeting Pakistan's goals in the Tribal Areas.

CONCERNS ABOUT TALIBANIZATION FUELING NEW GOVERNMENT MEASURES

¶19. (C) Hyat reported that the National Security Council had, on June 11, decided to form a task force to fight Talibanization in the Tribal Areas and the adjacent settled areas. Recruiting more Frontier Corps troops was necessary to root out Talibanization, but it would take time to raise such forces. Meanwhile, the committee was looking for actions that could show an effect within two-three months. He did not provide further details on what those actions might be.

¶20. (C) Responding to the Charge's question about overall coordination for Tribal Area development and security enhancement, Hyat posited that the new task force, of which he was chair, might be able to fill such a role. Noting that

ISLAMABAD 00002796 004 OF 005

all military and civilian stakeholders were part of the task force, he promised to consider the possibility of filling a coordination role and then, if appropriate, discussing the idea with the government.

BORDER SECURITY

¶21. (C) Hyat highlighted that 13-14 thousand vehicles legally crossed the Pakistan-Afghanistan border each day, while over 45,000 people transited at various official border crossings.

Given the large numbers, differentiating between "good guys and bad guys" was an enormous challenge. He had told Afghan National Army General Bismullah Khan that the two armies should jointly develop a border control plan that they could present to their governments. According to Hyat, both President Musharraf and Northwest Frontier Province Governor Orakzai supported his idea of allowing the militaries to cooperatively develop a proposal to be shared with civilian authorities. Hyat said he had requested that General McNeill support the Afghan Army in working on its part of the proposal, since the Afghans would need capacity assistance in the project.

¶22. (C) Assistant Secretary Boucher noted that it seemed border challenges fell into two major categories: those involving the flow of people and vehicles at official border crossings; and those involving criminals and miscreants using foot and donkey paths to cross the border. The U.S. would be willing to assist Pakistan in dealing with both types of challenges. He also acknowledged that, particularly in working on the legal crossing points, Afghanistan's cooperation would be important.

TRIPARTITE COMMISSION

¶23. (C) Hyat noted that Afghan National Army General Bismullah Khan, General McNeill, and himself had met several times in productive meetings. That said, he believed that the broader Tripartite Commission, which included military representatives, foreign ministry personnel, and other civilians, should meet more often. He said that commission meetings were essential for working on "nitty gritty details."

INDIA

¶24. (C) Hyat spoke of how much Pakistan would benefit from peace with India. He noted that the current stability had enabled Pakistan to redeploy two army brigades from Sialkot and Lahore to the Afghan border. With permanent peace, Pakistan would benefit both economically and in terms of

security.

BALUCHISTAN (AND WANTED BALUCH NATIONALISTS)

¶25. (C) Both Hyat and Nadeem complained vigorously over what they described as Afghanistan's harboring two Baluch terrorists in Afghanistan. Hyat said he had told General Khan that such actions could "eviscerate" the bilateral relationship. Nadeem claimed the two men were able to direct terrorist operations from their remote locations. Hyat stressed that Interpol had issued warrants for the two, and that the evidence against the men was spelled out in the warrants. He said that Afghanistan's complaints about Pakistan's not doing enough to find terrorist leaders who were trying to hide rang hollow when two wanted terrorists were allowed to live in the open in Afghan cities.

¶26. (C) Hyat said that Pakistan, especially the army, had "won over" most of the tribes of Baluchistan by providing economic development. Life for Baluchistan's population had

ISLAMABAD 00002796 005 OF 005

improved more in the last five years than in the previous 50.

He said that the government was negotiating with various tribes and had sponsored local elections as a step toward greater democracy. Nadeem said the government was converting areas formerly under tribal remit to government authority. Five years ago, only five of 35 districts were under Baluchistan police authority. Now, 25 are, with the rest soon to be converted. This, he said, made life better for the population, as they were no longer subject to the decrees of tribal leaders sometimes interested only in protecting their personal power.

BODDE